

To the members of the appropriations committee:

My name is Elizabeth Kelly and I am a Reference Librarian at the Southbury Public Library. I am providing written testimony in support of funding BorrowIT CT and Connecticut's State Library and its services.

Our library is made up of 21 staff members, 8,899 patrons, 93,000 books, and 32,000 square feet. As large and dedicated as we are, we are just one library in one town with limited resources and finite space. We could not neither afford in our budget nor store in our building all the items our patrons need, so our patrons rely heavily on BorrowIT CT to access these vital materials.

Reciprocal lending is one of the core strengths of Connecticut libraries and has enabled a de facto regional system for more than 40 years. BorrowIT CT enables any state resident to access more than 15 million items around Connecticut. For our town's residents, this increases the number of materials they can access by an astounding 16,459% (the percent increase from the Southbury Public Library's 93,000 items to the state's 15.4 million items). We get so many positive compliments from out of town patrons who are elated to be able to access our library's resources, and we are very happy to provide them. Last year throughout the state, 3,891,944 items were loaned to non-residents—that is approximately 58.4 million dollars' worth of materials. These materials are not just for pleasure reading- they are resources on education, employment, and difficult personal topics. In our state, that is almost 4 million opportunities for personal growth, self-directed education, and self-improvement. Our town, our state, and our country are much better places when our residents and citizens have access to vital resources on education, employment, and personal growth.

Please fund BorrowIT CT and the Connecticut State Library's other services; they are vital to the health of Connecticut's libraries. These services enable us to support and serve more of Connecticut's residents and better serve our library patrons. Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,
Elizabeth Kelly
Reference Librarian
Southbury Public Library